This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver Sea,
VVhich serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a Moate defensiue to a house,
Against the enuy of lesse happier Lands,
This blessed plot, this Earth this Realme, this England,
This Nurse, this teeming wombe of Royall Kings,
Fear'd by their breed, and famous for their birth,
Renowned for their deeds, as farre from home,
For Christian service and true Chivalry,
As is the sepulcher in stubborne *Iury*
Of the worlds ransome, blessed *Maries* sonne.
This Land of such deare soules, this deare deare Land,
Deare for her reputation through the world,
Is now Leas'd out (I dye pronouncing it)
Like to a Tenement, or pelting Farme.
England bound in with the triumphant Sea,
VVhose rocky shore beates backe the enuious siedge
Of watry Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
VVith Inky blottes, and rotten Parchment bonds.
That England that was wont to conquer others,
Hath made a shamefull conquest of it selfe.
Ah, would the scandall vanish with my life,
How happy then were my ensuing death?

Enter King, Queene, Aumerle, Bushy, Greene, Bagot, Ros, and Willoughby.

Yor. The King is come, deale mildly with his youth,
For young hot Coalts, being rag'd, doe rage the more.
Qu. How fares our noble Vncle, *Lancaster*?
Ri. VVhat comfort man? How is't with aged *Gaunt*?
Ga. Oh how that name befits my composition:
Old *Gaunt* indeed, and gaunt in being old:
VVithin me griefe hath kept a tedious fast,
And who abstaines from meate, that is not gaunt:
For sleeping England long time have I watcht
VVatching breeds leanesse, leanesse is all gaunt:
The pleasure that some Fathers feed upon,

Is my strict fast, I meane my Childrens lookes,
And therein fasting, hast thou made me gaunt:
Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave,
VVhose hollow wombe inherits nought but bones.
Rich. Can sicke men play so nicely with their names?
Gau. No, misery makes sport to mocke it selfe:
Since thou dost seeke to kill my name in me,
I mocke my name (great King) to flatter thee.
Ric. Should dying men flatter those that live?
Gau. No, no, man living flatter those that dye.
Ric. Thou now a dying, sayst thou flatter'st me.
Gau. O no, thou dyest, though I the sicker be.
Rich. I am in health I breathe, I see thee ill.
Gau. Now he that made me, knowes I see thee ill:
Ill in my selfe to see, and in thee, seeing ill,
Thy death-bed is no lesser then the Land,
VVherein thou lyest in reputation sicke,
And thou too careleese patient as thou art.
Commit'st thy annoynted body to the cure
Of those Physitions, that first wounded thee:
A thousand flatterers sit within thy Crowne,
VVhose compasse is no bigger then thy hand,
And yet encaged in so small a Verge,
The waste is no whit lesser then thy Land,
Oh had thy Grandsir with a Prophets eye,
Seene how his sonnes sonne, should destroy his sonnes,
From forth thy reach he would have layd thy shame,
Deposing thee before thou wert possest,
VVhich art possest now to depose thy selfe,
Why (Cosin) were thou Regent of the world,
It were a shame to let this Land by lease:
But for thy world enioying but this Land,
Is it not more then shame, to shame it so?
Landlord of England art thou, and not King:
Thy state of Law, is bondslave to the Law,
And ——

Rich. And thou, a lunaticke leane-witted foole,
Presuming on an Agues priveledge,

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE *Richard II* (STC 22313) LONDON, 1634 THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY (Arch. G e.20) Octavo